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Bard

Read the papers.

Crisis.

Corporations flounder
drunks at a party
concentrating on what
somebody is trying to say
it turns out to be them
falling all over the furniture,

to get the mon.

Everybody scared.

I tried to get them to look inside
the musical Vienna in the heart
all those sly tones and resignations

enemies having a good talk in the Prater
and it was no dream,
there really is a taxi
take me, it's my turn

arrange a midnight drive to the absolute
but keep the engine running
kids in that neighborhood throw stones

from the stock market pages of last night's papers
endless columns of ink take off
and begin to sketch the outline of Messiah
shivering in numbers,

with a nude form
stretched across the darkening city
and a garment of introspection
that is all he can call his own

and from that awful presence we rush in terror
back to the heathery leathery auto, thoughtless safe
in public places and so to bed,
dreamless,
unconsoled, stuffed with academic plausibilities —
nothing, nothing is as hard as thinking.

22 October 2001
Lawrence

To speak enough
conference those poems a shy
voice bellowing its intimates

privities. I am exposed in speech.
The cottonwood out the window
winters holds four dozen eagles

the man at the desk said so
midnight by the shallow river
downstream from the copious barrage.

23 October 2001
Lawrence

Forty miles through prairie fog
deep as can be, the scratch of lights
against unyielding glass

glass of the air

cottonwoods half imagined
skeleton goblets lost silhouette

the meager trees

the grass itself is glass
lost in our breath.

23 October 2001
Kansas City

A lake chance
after prairie what
do I know about
music René no
sense in sweltering
the suave ordnance
shoot fall and kill

make help make hay
while the haw thorns
while the rain
bows blue-fingered
over the tarmac and

send us home tonight.
To weave
in our own leaves.
Every metaphor
a bent coin wont
fit the slot
wont fall.
I think it is a day
when one is given
a new alphabet
x-ray vision to discern
woman heart and where
beneath Joseph
Smith's anxious fingers
(can a hand have
asthma?) the
golden tablets
crazed with narrative
spill down Cumora
on the west side
where men stand
and see to this day the
meager towers of Rochester

angel! It is a day
that needs you
a stark revealing
to bring home

nothing clear
everything new

the body yearns
inside the body
to be outside
the body out
there in the rueful
randomness of things

delicate, step down.

23 October 2001
Cleveland

“Beach at high tide” she said
looking at my fortune. What?
“Beach: *Hai Tan*” she said,
how to learn Chinese
on the back of your fortune.
Hai means Sea, I said,
Sort of remembering. No high,
No tide. An island
in the southern ocean
hour after hour worn away by waves.

24 October 2001, Kingston

Have hidden suffering so long
it stops hurting or
till the day itself turns pain

so I lose the difference between
me and it and there is no feeling

since feeling is difference
and all the world is samed away

where is pain when I don't feel it?

here somewhere —
I can feel myself not feeling.

24 October 2001

HAYDN

for Ken Irby

Driving me across the beautiful prairie
in the deepest fog I've ever seen
You ask me why I don't like Haydn
and suddenly today I know the answer

Haydn's music is a drunk man trying to act sober
and I'm a teetotaler needing all the drunk I can.

24 October 2001

mixed in the ladder
rungs a rung of air

the bronze leaves skip
falling nine days

to this white deck
a few insects quick

sunlight and yard
rust and gamboges

a cold front moves in
enough ampersands

to hold the world
glue yourself to me

I once said now
let the wind go.

25 October 2001

Samaritan pilfering the native grace
by dint of will. But will
without lineage, what means that
or how avail? Shepherds

inherit from their sheep itself
the gist of care. And wolves
tear with their narrow mouths
electric teeth. Whereas for us

nothing is natural. Suppose I wanted
to do you such good, amazing
chalices of wise milk bring
till you knew everything and slept with me

would that catch fire and give light?
Is will a kindness turned against the world
and just for us? Don't I need
a master to instruct my wishes,

mistress my whimsy to a proper edge?
Till you are mine (it all means that,
an interchange of possession no natural
order could convey) and I am yours.

25 October 2001

for Boylan

How old are you
Anyhow in notes
Of dust I mean or means
Of music, who?

Because a bird day
Is a flutter up inside
As once a mother let
A word slip out

25 October 2001

Not enough said
No day to say

The beautiful yellow path through the woods
Is woods, is made with fall, is deep

We can go on walking forever
Our time suddenly discovers time

Itself instead of all the things time's said to be
We found a well of time

Found that time too is a river running towards us
We meet and are wet with amber quiet.

26 October 2001

The trouble is I don't tell
You what I want
But it's the want
That gives color to the eye

How we look at each other.

26 October 2001

THE LOST GIRL

I think I've lost you now

Not to someone else
Or to the distances themselves

I've lost you in myself,
I can't find inside me
The feelings for you
That made me feel so good to be me

What do I do when I'm deserted
By the one I really want to leave me alone?

27 October 2001

Every window a prospect
The mountain I can't remember its name
From which dying Moses looked
Out over the holy
Land he could never enter.

Everything I see distances me from myself.

27 October 2001

DREAM DATA:

(from late September)

1.

Sparks from the anvil joining the stars in the sky.
But the colors wrong.

2.

The young Isaac Stern before becoming a violinist concretized as a tenor,
specializing in the French song repertory. He had 50 songs to sing.

(28 October 2001)

FRAGMENTS

(from late September, early October):

I map my body onto theirs
export my sensations
and try to meet them there

on their skin.

Neurosis.

Nora on a swing.

+++++

A green tea so subtle

A taste

Like walking

Into a dark

Room you can't see nothing

+++++

a man who can't

tell if he's hot or is he cold

+++++

My body is operated
From the spirit world

(28 October 2001)

BROADWAY

being on the street
the literal chair
I am cathedral at last

the size of being who I am
and wanting her
ridiculous to want

when I am at the center of myself
same as my own size
and can touch everything

from where I am.

(mid-October)
28 October 2001

Charles I listen at last
the Asia the enterprise
to travail by ownership
and send it out

a Packard car
or any other swan

the mysterious personnel of poetry
speaking Welsh with the black and white dog.

(mid-October, New York)
28 October 2001

So they brought back a taste of mint
we stored between two cedar shingles
the kind you use to slap the moon
when she dances in your window

waking the dead. The dead bring nothing,
lost as they are in a dream of becoming,
life that long entitlement. We had to bring

the milk, the smoke, the sensual molecules
wrapped in formalist illusions (this
is a thing) and the voices in passing cars
everybody talking their heads off with sincerity.

Give me instead the wax of silence
the way you brought out of ancient caverns
new money spilled on your freemason friends
snaky with secrets then January in Jamaica

island of tee shirts and hair. Shut up
arranged for piano, four hands. Flame
arranged for intercrural ecstasies
blow down the door and eat this little pig.

2.
Samoyed trances in tropic heat
a mother needs all her little contradictions
there's not much truth in music
but what there is belongs to the devil

because he cranks the mill of human feelings
and gives us coarse or fine the mortar
that holds the house of days together

percept welded to percept to percept forever
brick Torah of our fallen religion
because I was Jewish once before the war

came and bore me in a different body
clay and eggnog all protestant and puce
because there really was a meaning

3.
lost before the beginning of the world
and you girls have been known to babble it
accidentally on purpose, on pillows
to the happy few who know how to hear

your skin between the wine and morning.

27 October 2001

Sometimes I think that everything I write is talking to the angel. But I get the angel's name wrong so often that I'm afraid to write you down.

And if they answered
who would I say was calling

would I think to call me Kelly
the name by which I guess they know me

or who knows what cryptic moniker they use
to keep me secret

keep me hidden even from myself?
Down your breast a spill of lukewarm coffee

to lick eternally. Rimbaud sent it
from Harrar, all godliness is here,

a skin of poetry. Is that my name?

28 October 2001

New pencil's
Hard words

What gets
Said is wood.

28 October 2001

What does it mean
to say I'm going to die

going,
but going to die?

What does it mean to say
(que quiere decir)
to be going to

to anywhere or anyone
but come back to it
(back to it?)

come home to die?

What does it mean
inside me to think
what I am thinking

aroma of deathbed
technical
agony, article of death

am I thinking of it as a gesture
a text
I struggle to inscribe

in the nowhere places
nohere places
with last meat breath

leaving certain things
to certain people
(but that's giving
not dying)

and getting out of certain
other people's way

a convenient absence
in the shape of a word?

28 October 2001

How little we know
Of what we know

The long dusty corridors
Inside the heart
Or wherever it is
Where everything that ever hurt
Is archived

Never lost
Never understood.

29 October 2001

Things to catch
hold of,

watermelon leaves, the sound of ice,

lucent yellow of the spicebush
wild with novembering.

Out is such a strange way to go,
whose body was this whole world in?

before it broke and became mine and yours
no wonder we can't quite get rid of each other

scraps of God strewn around deep space
and I have found you again

your mother said
after all these lives.

29 October 2001

Not dutiful but desire
for learning has a red face
and leans close to you she would instruct

a man sitting under a tree in the forest
more than a man more than a tree

everything you speak is an aggregate
a conglomerate a designation only

scarlet her face
transparent
in the null-light
of this intentional dream

showing me the golden faucet somewhere
that turns off the names of things.

30 October 2001

I know you are like me a man of uttermost absentminded sincerity
So when we leave a museum — say the Mauritshuis in The Hague
Which we have never visited together — the paintings
Are still on the walls, only their images — imprints, *umbrae*, shadows—
Have been abstracted, tucked neatly in the budget of our brains
Walking off like thieves right past the smiling Interpol bus conductor
We can go everywhere like that, too young, too hungry, never satisfied,
Vermeer's fingerprints all over our minds, happy birthday, Jan,
You're in the world too, a Scorpio, you quiet terrorist from Delft.

31 October 2001

All I want
is to say this thing

all amber glowing
sticky with desire

a small
gnat stuck in it
from before time began.

31 October 2001